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L17 and L18	21

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<u>L19</u>	l17 and L18	21	<u>L19</u>
<u>L18</u>	driver and passenger	34609	<u>L18</u>
<u>L17</u>	L15 and l11	47	<u>L17</u>
<u>L16</u>	l14 and L15	19	<u>L16</u>
<u>L15</u>	identif\$	1382214	<u>L15</u>
<u>L14</u>	l12 and L13	19	<u>L14</u>
<u>L13</u>	traffic	186842	<u>L13</u>
<u>L12</u>	l5 and L11	20	<u>L12</u>
<u>L11</u>	l7 and L10	50	<u>L11</u>
<u>L10</u>	carpool or (car adj pool)	125	<u>L10</u>
<u>L9</u>	l5 and L8	6	<u>L9</u>
<u>L8</u>	l4 and L7	20	<u>L8</u>
<u>L7</u>	match\$	922097	<u>L7</u>
<u>L6</u>	l4 and L5	6	<u>L6</u>

<u>L5</u>	gps	411190	<u>L5</u>
<u>L4</u>	rideshare or (ride adj shar\$3)	63	<u>L4</u>
<u>L3</u>	l1 and L2	0	<u>L3</u>
<u>L2</u>	trip	162658	<u>L2</u>
<u>L1</u>	(carpool or (car adj pool)) near match	1	<u>L1</u>

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<u>L16</u>	l14 and L15	19	<u>L16</u>
<u>L15</u>	identif\$	1382214	<u>L15</u>
<u>L14</u>	l12 and L13	19	<u>L14</u>
<u>L13</u>	traffic	186842	<u>L13</u>
<u>L12</u>	l5 and L11	20	<u>L12</u>
<u>L11</u>	l7 and L10	50	<u>L11</u>
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<u>L8</u>	l4 and L7	20	<u>L8</u>
<u>L7</u>	match\$	922097	<u>L7</u>
<u>L6</u>	l4 and L5	6	<u>L6</u>
<u>L5</u>	gps	411190	<u>L5</u>
<u>L4</u>	rideshare or (ride adj shar\$3)	63	<u>L4</u>
<u>L3</u>	l1 and L2	0	<u>L3</u>

L2 trip
L1 (carpool or (car adj pool)) near match

162658 L2
1 L1

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L19: Entry 2 of 21

File: PGPB

Mar 11, 2004

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20040049424 A1

TITLE: System and method for facilitating ridesharing

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0009] Individuals who do rideshare today have relatively fixed schedules and rideshare primarily to save time, money, or both. They typically save time by traveling in designated high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes or by working during the trip (as a passenger, for example). They save money by splitting the costs of fuel, parking, and wear and tear on an automobile.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0013] The present invention identifies potential ridesharers for riders and drivers and helps them create ridesharing/carpool trips to get to work faster and save money. The invention serves both urban and rural travelers by removing cars from the roads, while at the same time providing the personal travel freedoms that automobile commuters have come to expect. Specifically, the present invention identifies compatible drivers and riders, and encourages these drivers and riders to participate in the rideshare program through a variety of incentives.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0015] Optionally, instead of rideshare miles, participation can be quantified in many different ways, such as by the number of rideshare trips taken, the actual amount of reduced emissions (e.g., driving a fuel-efficient car instead of an inefficient one), the number of passengers taken, the time of day traveled, and the type of roadway taken (e.g., greater participation recognized if trip does not involve typically congested roads, such as major arteries).

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0047] Service provider 102 administers the rideshare program of the present invention. As part of this administration, service provider 102 communicates rideshare incentives to rideshare participants 104, facilitates the matching of rideshare participants 104 for rideshare trips, stores personal information of rideshare participants 104, tracks the rideshare participation (e.g., miles traveled) by rideshare participants 104, facilitates the awarding of incentives to rideshare participants 104 based on the participation (e.g., accumulated rideshare miles), collects and sells the credits earned by rideshare participants 104, and facilitates alternative transportation for rideshare participants 104 that cannot set up a rideshare trip.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0049] Member/trip database 112 contains member and trip information for each rideshare participant 104 and rideshare trip, which can be used to identify viable member and trip matches. Examples of member information include address, criminal record, driving record, insurance information, credit card data, vehicle identification number (VIN), and other background-check information. Examples of trip information include typical trip originations and destinations for a participant, such a participant's daily commute to work or frequent trips to a grocery store.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0072] In an embodiment of the present invention, to use the rideshare service, an individual must first sign up to become a member. In an exemplary implementation, a member of the service can be either an observer or an active rider. To become an observer, an individual must enter minimal information such as name, address, and email address. In addition, an observer must also create a unique name, which the observer then uses for identification in interacting with the service provider and other members of the rideshare service. The observer status allows an individual to view the network of rideshare members and observe how that network is forming, how it works, and how it might benefit the individual. Observers cannot schedule or take trips through the rideshare service until they convert their observer status into an active rider.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0086] As shown, a first rideshare participant 300 searches for a second rideshare participant 304 who matches a specified profile. If the first rideshare participant 300 finds the second rideshare participant 304 to be compatible, the first rideshare participant 300 initiates contact 306 with the second rideshare participant 304 either through the user interface of the present invention (e.g., through message boards) or through other communication means such as email or telephone. If, through this communication, an agreement to rideshare is reached, then the two riders add each other to their travel buddy lists. FIG. 3 shows rideshare participant 304 added to the travel buddy list 308 of rideshare participant 300. FIG. 5 shows another exemplary travel buddy list 502. The travel buddy list contains the names of all the riders with whom an individual has chosen to rideshare for future rides.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0087] In an embodiment of the present invention, matching riders are added to each other's buddy list only after both parties agree to the match. In this manner, the present invention ensures that the parties are in agreement before facilitating a rideshare between them. Likewise, if one rider initiates the removal of the other rider from her travel buddy list, then the initiating rider is automatically removed from the other rider's travel buddy list, indicating that neither party can rideshare with the other.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0089] To schedule trips, a rideshare participant 450 enters a trip request into the user interface of service provide 102, as represented by step 400 in FIG. 4. The user interface could be, for example, an Interactive Voice Response Unit (IVRU), a web site or other interface accessible via the Internet, or an application that users install on either their computers or wireless Internet access devices. After accessing the rideshare user interface, rideshare participant 450 can select the "schedule trip" option and then select a predetermined "one-click-trip" or a custom trip. Then, as shown in step 402, service provider 102 searches member/trip database 112 to see if there are any trips that match the search request. Service provider 102 can also limit the search to include only those trips posted by individuals who are included on the travel buddy list for rideshare participant 450.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0090] Once potential rideshare trips are found, they are ranked according to how well they match rideshare participant 450's search request and presented to rideshare participant 450 for review. For each trip presented, rideshare participant 450 can review the exact trip details and the information on each participating individual, including their travel preferences and contact information. When rideshare participant 450 finds a desired trip, she accepts the trip via the user interface provided by service provider 102, whereupon service provider 102 then promptly informs all parties of the trip information. The user interface presented by service provider 102 facilitates the collection and management of the rideshare trip information and also presents the contact

information necessary to facilitate direct communication between rideshare participants using, for example, email or instant messaging. When a trip is completely scheduled, service provider 102 may return a special trip identification and password to the ridesharing participants.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0091] At a preset time before the trip is taken, service provider 102 contacts all ridesharing parties (e.g., via voice or email) to remind them of the trip and asks them to confirm their participation in the trip. This final step helps the parties ensure that the trip is scheduled properly and that the parties will participate as originally planned. When the parties meet and begin their trip, they verify that they each have the same password and identification and the trip begins.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0093] After a trip has concluded, the service provider contacts the rideshare participants and asks them to confirm that the trip was actually taken. If all the rideshare participants confirm the trip, then each participant receives an allotment of rideshare miles in her rideshare account. In an exemplary implementation of the present invention, the rideshare participant who drove may receive a quantity of rideshare miles that is different (e.g., greater) than the quantity received by the passengers, and may vary based on the time of day, road driven, miles traveled, passengers carried or vehicle driven. The rideshare miles are accumulated and stored in a rideshare participant's personal account for future redemption. An exemplary account is shown as account 506 in FIG. 5 and also in FIG. 6.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0111] According to an embodiment of the present invention, for rideshare participants who communicate with the service provider using a mobile device (e.g., either Internet or voice related), the service provider is linked with global positioning systems (e.g., location services 122 of FIG. 1) to determine the location of the rideshare participants. This real-time location-based information enables the service provider to assist in linking rideshare participants and in making trip matches quickly and efficiently. The service provider can work with a variety of location-based technologies to support the mobile needs of the rideshare participants.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0136] As an example of a specific implementation of the present invention, FIGS. 9-16 show a series of screen images through which a rideshare participant can register with and participate in a rideshare program. FIG. 9 shows a main screen 900 of an exemplary user interface for facilitating a rideshare program, according to an embodiment of the present invention. As shown, main screen 900 lists the planned rideshare trips of a rideshare participant along with the status for each trip 901, the role (drive or ride) for the participant 902, the rideshare incentive 903, a link to the full trip details 904, and, for trips that are incomplete, a link to find matching trips 905. Also included on the main screen 900 are links to find trips 906, find travel buddies 907, view a trip calendar 908, view ridesharing incentives 909, and to setup a participant's account 910. Calendar function 908 displays trip originations, destinations, departure times, holidays, etc. on a calendar. Rideshare search function 906 enables a participant to search for other compatible rideshare trips and search function 907 enables a participant to search for travel buddies with whom the participant could potentially rideshare.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0137] Before executing these functions, however, a rideshare participant preferably provides profile information to the service provider, which includes, for example, personal information (name, address, telephone number, email address, etc.), typical commute information, driver information, and travel preferences. FIG. 10 illustrates an exemplary user interface 1000 through which a rideshare

participant enters commute information such as origination, destination, departure time, return time, commuting days, riding/driving preference, scope of invitations to rideshare, and any special notes.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0138] FIG. 11 illustrates an exemplary user interface 1100 through which a rideshare participant enters driver information such as type of vehicle, driver's license information, auto insurance information, and current modes and frequencies of transportation (which can be used by the service provider to calculate the emissions and congestion relief attributable to a particular rideshare participant).

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0139] FIG. 12 illustrates an exemplary user interface 1200 through which a rideshare participant enters travel criteria and travel preferences. In this example, the travel criteria include the gender of rideshare participants that a rideshare participant is willing to travel with, the rating of rideshare participants that a participant is will to travel with, whether the participant will travel with smokers, whether the participant has carried pets in his vehicle or is willing to travel with drivers who have, and the number of participants the participant is willing to ride with or drive. The travel preferences address talking, languages spoken, radio use, and driving style.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0141] In response, the user interface displays a search report screen 1400 as shown in FIG. 14, which presents a rideboard listing of matching rideshare trips. As shown, the rideboard lists information on the other participants' trips, including origination, destination, percentage of match to inquiring participant's trips, and departing times. The rideboard also allows the inquiring rideshare participant to select a potential trip, receive more information on the trip and its associated rideshare participant, and eventually contact the other rideshare participant to arrange a rideshare.

CLAIMS:

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the quantity of rideshare participation is one of a number of rideshare miles traveled, a number rideshare trips taken, an amount of reduced emissions, a number of passengers taken, a time of day traveled, and a type of roadway taken.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the quantity is rideshare miles, wherein tracking the quantity comprises allotting a first amount of rideshare miles for each mile traveled as a driver and allotting a second amount of rideshare miles for each mile traveled as a passenger, and wherein the first amount is different from the second amount.

16. The method of claim 1, further comprising: receiving information on a desired rideshare trip from the rideshare participant; identifying potential rideshare participants having rideshare trips compatible with the desired rideshare trip; and displaying the potential rideshare participants to the rideshare participant.

24. The system of claim 23, wherein the quantity is one of a number of rideshare miles traveled, a number rideshare trips taken, an amount of reduced emissions, a number of passengers taken, a time of day traveled, and a type of roadway taken.

28. The system of claim 23, wherein the application is further adapted to: receive information on a desired rideshare trip from the rideshare participant; identify potential rideshare participants having rideshare trips compatible with the desired rideshare trip; and display the potential rideshare participants to the rideshare participant.

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